

### Item #37: Timber Harvest on Slopes Greater Than 40%

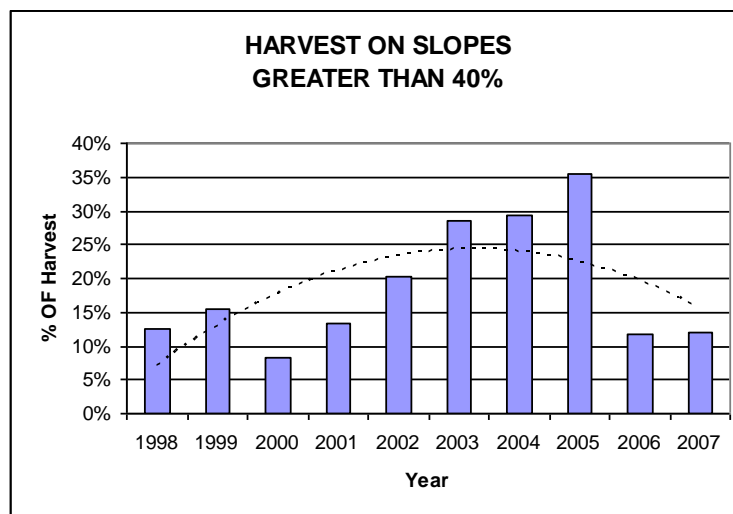
**Evaluation Question:** Is harvest on occurring on slopes greater than 40%, proportional to the greater landscape?

**Resources to be measured:**

- Acres sold for harvest on slopes > 40% by year
- Total sold acres of harvest by year

**Data Sources:** Forest activity database (FACTS) harvest activity query with GIS slope data

This monitoring item was established to ensure that harvest activity is distributed across the landscape and is not disproportionately occurring on gentle terrain. Forest Plan baseline (page V-2) states that 54 percent of the suitable timber lands are on slopes steeper than 40%. Averages in prior monitoring reports were that harvest on steep slopes was well below the 54% level, however this was not identified as an area of concern, due to the fact that overall harvest levels were well below Forest Plan projections.



**Figure 1: Harvest on Slopes Greater Than 40%, Flathead NF**

Data for this monitoring period indicates that the vast majority of acres harvested, are on slopes less than 40%. The average over the decade is 19% of all harvest occurs on slopes greater than 40%. The recent emphasis on treatment in the wildland urban interface, adjacent to homes and generally on gentle terrain, is a contributing factor to the decreasing percentage. The higher percentage in 2003 to 2005 reflects numerous fire salvage sales. Over time, this trend could be a concern, as remaining areas for potential harvest will tend towards the steeper, less economical areas. However, in the monitoring period, harvest on gentle slopes represents only 6% of the total gentle ground within the suitable base. This would appear to be a sustainable level.

**Recommended Actions:** Re-evaluate the usefulness of this item during forest plan revision. Recommend that this item be discontinued.